

Urban County of San Luis Obispo

Community Participation Plan

For preparing and amending

The Consolidated Plan or The Action Plan



Approved by the County of San Luis Obispo Board of Supervisors on
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Department of Planning and Building

Community Participation Plan

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Section I

Introduction

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires the San Luis Obispo Urban County to provide a Consolidated Plan and annual Action Plans in order to receive entitlement funds under the CDBG, HOME, and ESG programs. The Consolidated Plan and the Action Plans outline community needs for housing and community development. In addition to the Consolidated Plan and annual Action Plans, the San Luis Obispo Urban County must adopt a Community (Citizen) Participation Plan. The Community Participation Plan serves as the Citizen Participation Plan to establish the procedures for involving the public when developing and amending the Consolidated Plan and the Action Plans for the San Luis Obispo Urban County. This Community Participation Plan complies with the requirements of HUD pursuant to Title 24, Subpart B, Section 91.105. Any revisions to the Community Participation Plan will require the Board of Supervisors approval through a public hearing.

The process to prepare the Consolidated Plan and the annual Action Plans is illustrated in the flow chart on the following page.

The Consolidated Plan and the Action Plans describe the projects proposed for funding through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, the HOME Investment Partnership (HOME) program and the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program.

The primary purpose of the Community Participation Plan is to encourage citizens to participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan and the Action Plans and in any substantial amendments and performance reports. The participation of all community members is encouraged including minorities, non-English speakers and people with physical impairments.

The purposes of the Community Participation Plan are to:

1. Solicit and consider public input when the Urban County's Consolidated Plan and the Action Plans are being prepared, amended or,reported on; and
2. Provide procedures and guidelines for gaining public input, particularly by persons of low and moderate income to whom federal funds are primarily targeted; and
3. Obtain community ideas and opinion regarding the need for affordable housing, economic development, public services, and facilities.

Consolidated Plan or Action Plan Preparation

Annual Performance Report Summarized progress of previously funded projects. Published for public review.	August - September
Needs workshops Provide information about available federal funding, eligible types of projects and discuss community needs.	August – October
Request for proposals Prepare and release request for proposals (RFP) and receive project proposals.	August – October
Initial City and County needs hearings Formally advertised hearings held by City Council and the Board of Supervisors to discuss available funds, eligible projects, and community needs.	October – November
Prepare draft of the Consolidated Plan and/or the Action Plan Prepare and release draft plan; 30-day public review period.	December – February
Additional workshops Explain draft plan and invite public comments	January – February
Final plan approvals Conduct hearing of each City Council and Board of Supervisors for approval of plan. Incorporate comments.	February - April
Submit to HUD	May

Section II

Encouraging Community Participation

This section discusses the specific activities and procedures that will be undertaken to encourage the community participation in developing the Consolidated Plan and the Action Plans. These procedures will be implemented during each annual plan preparation cycle.

1. **Library:** A public information library will be maintained by the County Department of Planning and Building throughout the process of preparing and implementing the Consolidated Plan and the Action Plans. The library will contain program related law, regulations and other information. The library will be available for public use during normal working hours at the County Department of Planning and Building. Department staff will be designated to respond to public inquiries about grant programs.
2. **Project Information:** Information about specific projects is available through the County Department of Planning and Building and each City participating in the program.
3. **Press Releases:** Press releases will be mailed directly to appropriate media announcing the purpose, time, date and place of any program related to public workshops and meetings.
4. **Meeting Notices:** All public hearings shall be advertised through written notices published in newspapers of general circulation at least 10 days for the incorporated cities and 15 days for the County prior to meetings. When appropriate, press releases and meeting notices will be mailed directly to interested persons, or groups, who request to be placed on the County's mailing list. Applicants for CDBG, HOME or ESG will also receive written notice.
5. **Additional Outreach Efforts:** At a minimum, the County will use alternative community outreach methods to:
 - 1) Encourage public participation by low and moderate income residents living in slum and blighted areas as defined by the Cities' redevelopment agencies within the county. According to HUD 24 CFR, Part 91.5, "low income" is defined as not exceeding 50 percent of the median family income for the area and "moderate income" is defined as not exceeding 80 percent of the median family income for the area;
 - 2) Engage minorities and non-English speakers by providing a translator at the public meeting, and reaching out to disabled persons by providing user friendly copies of the Consolidated Plan and the Action

Plans including Braille format, oral format, or delivering copies to homebound individuals upon in-advance requests; hold public workshops in facilities that are accessible to physically and mobility impaired individuals

- 3) Encourage participation of local and regional institutions including the Continuum of Care, businesses, nonprofit organizations, philanthropic organizations, community and faith based organizations, and developers; and
- 4) Encourage residents of public and assisted housing developments to participate by informing public housing authorities.

Section III

Technical Assistance to Representative Groups

1. **Assistance:** Technical Assistance will be provided upon request to groups representing persons of low or moderate-income. This assistance is to help in the development of proposals for funding under various programs. Such assistance will include providing guidance about the amount of funds available; activities eligible for funding through grant programs; rating factors used to select projects for funding; income requirements that may apply to grant programs; time-frames and deadlines for applications and funding; potential availability of alternative funding and the need for matching funds; referrals to other appropriate funding agencies; reporting requirements for grant programs; and federal laws that may apply to a project.
2. **Staff Availability:** County Planning staff will meet with representative groups of low and moderate-income persons upon request to explain the grant programs, rules and procedures.

Section IV

Public Hearings and Workshops

The County will hold a minimum of two public hearings each year: one to initiate the Consolidated/Action Plan development and one before the final approval of the Consolidated/Action Plan. Throughout the preparation of the Consolidated/Action Plan, workshops will be held to identify and evaluate needs which may be addressed with CDBG, HOME, or ESG funds. Here “Plan” refers both to the Consolidated and Annual Action Plan.

1. **Needs Workshops and Outreach:** Prior to the preparation of the Plan,

the County Department of Planning and Building will conduct public outreach through 1) holding a minimum of two public workshops on a countywide basis, and 2) seeking input through at least one other outreach instrument such as a survey, focus group, video, and/or other web-based tool. Workshops will be conducted in various regions of the county. During these workshops, information will be provided to the public about the types of activities that can be funded and an estimate of the amount of funds that may be available. Public comments will be invited regarding housing and community development needs, which could be addressed through the CDBG, HOME or ESG programs.

2. **Needs Hearing:** From August through October of each year, the County will conduct an initial public hearing to discuss unmet community development needs. Each City participating in the Consolidated Plan or the Action Plans process is encouraged to conduct an initial hearing to discuss unmet needs. Pursuant to HUD's regulations, section 91.105, this hearing will gain early input from the public and elected officials prior to publishing the draft Plan. This hearing would be formally advertised. Issues such as community needs, amount of funds available, eligible types of projects, and program requirements may be addressed.
3. **Draft Plan Review:** The draft plan will be published for a 30-day public review period. The County will conduct at least two advertised public workshops after publication of a draft plan to answer questions and obtain public comments about the proposed draft Plan. These comments will be summarized and considered during the public hearings, and as part of the final approved Plan.
4. **Final Plan Approval:** A least one public hearing will be held by each participating City Council and the County Board of Supervisors to approve and authorize the submittal of the Urban County's Plan to HUD. The hearings will be properly advertised, including direct mailing to notify interested parties. The public shall have the opportunity to provide testimony at these hearings.

Section V

The Consolidated Plan or the Action Plan Amendments

When reallocating HUD grant funds from one CDBG or HOME project to another project, or from one ESG activity to another ESG activity, the County will amend the Consolidated Plan and Action Plans. Depending on the nature of the proposed changes, amendments are categorized as major, minor, or administrative amendments. It should be noted that HUD defines projects in the CDBG and HOME programs similar to the way that HUD defines activities in the

ESG program. The following describes the process for each type of amendment.

1. Major Amendment for Substantial Changes

A major amendment is required for the following scenarios:

- a. Reallocating more than \$25,000 of funds 1) from one CDBG or HOME project to another project, 2) from one ESG activity to another ESG activity 3) from program income generated from the CDBG, HOME (except the Tenant Based Rental Assistance program), or ESG funds;
- b. Cancelling an existing project that is not a “public service” or an “administrative” project;
- c. Adding a new CDBG or HOME project or a new ESG activity. New project or activity is defined as “new” when this project has not previously existed within the Consolidated Plan or the Action Plans;
- d. Changing goals or policies of the Consolidated Plan or the Action Plans, due to public request; and
- e. Substantially changing the purpose, scope, service level, location, or beneficiaries of an approved CDBG or HOME project or ESG activity.

The major amendment process includes the following steps:

1. One public hearing will be held;
2. A 15-day public notice of the date, time, and place of the public hearing will be made available to the public; and
3. The proposed changes to the Consolidated Plan or the Action Plans will be published in at least one newspaper of general circulation to allow the public to determine if they are affected and desire to comment on the proposed changes.

2. Minor Amendment for Public Service or Administrative Activities

A minor amendment is required when an existing CDBG “public service” or a HOME or CDBG “administrative” project is canceled within the same fiscal year and the reallocated funds are less than \$25,000. Minor amendments can be approved on a consent agenda.

3. Administrative Amendment

An administrative amendment involves the 1) reallocation of less than \$25,000 in funds for a CDBG or HOME project or an ESG activity, and does not result in the creation of a new or the cancellation of an existing CDBG or HOME project or an ESG activity, or 2) allocation of HOME

Tenant Based Rental Assistance (“TBRA”) program income back into the HOME TBRA program.

Section VI

Performance Report

1. Procedure

The County will prepare an annual performance report, which will be available for public review.

- a. Copies and Meetings.** Copies of the annual performance report will be available for comments at least 15 days prior to submission of the report to HUD. The County Department of Planning and Building may hold a public meeting regarding the annual performance report each year. The meeting would be noticed in the media through press releases.
- b. Available Reports.** Annual performance reports shall be made available upon request.
- c. Comments:** Comments received on the annual performance reports will be considered by the County for purposes of possible revisions to clarify information, correct inaccurate information and to help in the preparation of the Consolidated Plan or the Action Plans for the following year.

Section VII

Displacement of Persons

The Community Participation Plan shall, as required by 24 CFR Part 91, Section 91.105, set forth the jurisdiction’s plan “to minimize displacement of persons and to assist any persons displaced...”

The County of San Luis Obispo has in place a Residential antidisplacement and Relocation Plan as required under section 104 (d) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, which pertains to any funded project by the CDBG and HOME programs.

Section VIII

Comments and Complaints

- 1. Procedure.** The County and participating Cities will consider any

comments, views or complaints from community members received in writing, or orally at the public hearings in preparing the final Consolidated Plan or the Action Plans, amendments to the Plan, and/or the performance report.

A summary of comments or complaints, and a summary of any comments or views not accepted, and the reason thereof, shall be attached to the Final Consolidated Plan or the Action Plans, amendments to the Plan or the performance report as they are appropriate.

- 2. Response to Complaints.** The Department of Planning and Building will respond in writing within 15 working days where practical to written complaints and grievances related to the programs.

The Department of Planning and Building will ensure that community members with complaints or grievances regarding the Consolidated Plan or the Action Plans, amendment procedure and performance report receive an adequate response to their written complaints.